

Developing Children's Language Skills through Storybooks Based on Religious Moderation

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Abstract

This research is a research and development that aims to produce children's story books based on religious moderation in order to develop language skills and to form a profile of *Pancasila* students in early childhood. This research started from the results of pre-research conducted through a survey which showed the fact that it was still rare to find references to teaching materials with special themes on religious moderation used in learning at *Raudlatul Athfal*. The research design uses the ADDIE model which consists of the Analyze, Design, Develop, Implement and Evaluate stages. The results showed that the product development of children's storybooks based on religious moderation is valid and feasible for use in PAUD learning. Moreover, the result also shows that this book has a real contribution to developing language skills in teaching religious moderation and shaping the character of early childhood in accordance with the profile of *Pancasila* students.

Keywords: *language skill; children's story book; religious moderation; pancasila student profile*

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Introduction

Childhood has a unique character. Children like to read stories because this activity is very fun for them (Loka Yuniar & Kurniati, 2017). Through a story, children get entertainment and fun and also get character education that shapes their moral aspects and attitudes. Every story, either implicitly or explicitly, contains an ideology to construct values through the moral message conveyed. Furthermore, a story is not only an instrument to improve children's literacy, but also conveys values, beliefs, attitudes, behavior and social norms (Pulimeno et al., 2020). Children's story books according to Lukens in Nurgiyantoro (2005) are a collection of stories that tell about animals, humans and the environment that contain interesting pictures so that children are interested in reading them. In the collection of stories, of course, there is an element of advice or speech that provides a moral message about certain experiences and events contained in the form of simple stories.

Children who are accustomed to being brought close to story books will form a love of reading culture that automatically helps to hone their literacy and creativity skills. Therefore, story books that are served to children must be interesting so that they are interested in reading them (Strouse et al., 2018). Some of the interesting characteristics of children's story books include; (a) is fictional i.e. not real or made up; (b) is narrating events or events; (c) has a theme, plot, setting and characterization in the series of stories; and (d) imaginary or mere fantasy (Kartini, 2009). Several previous studies have proven that reading story books is very effective

in increasing moral intelligence in early childhood . Learning in the classroom by applying storytelling techniques has an effect on increasing moral intelligence in students compared to learning where students are not taught using storytelling techniques (Ahyani, 2019) So, children's story books are part of an interesting learning strategy as well as a medium in character education, especially in the aspect of early childhood development.

Children are an inseparable part of the survival of the Indonesian nation and state. However, they are very vulnerable to being exposed to the negative impacts of issues surrounding ethnicity, religion, race (Sara) and groups that develop in society (Wijaya et al., 2019). This is because they are a generation of great imitators and spectators. A survey conducted by the Ministry of Religion in 2017 involving children of Rohis (Islamic spirituality) showed that 78% of children agreed with the idea of a caliphate, 33% considered jihad to be fighting against infidels, 17% agreed that apostates were killed, 62% agreed to stoning, and 68% wanted to go to Syria or Palestine. The survey results are of course a concern for this nation. Various efforts have been made by the government to prevent the infiltration of radicalism in children through early prevention (Widyaningsih et al., 2017). In particular, the Ministry of Religion urges all levels of education from basic education to higher education to Islamic boarding school education to publish textbooks containing religious moderation content as an effort to strengthen character in order to tackle radicalism in the younger generation.

The term moderation can be interpreted as an attitude of staying away from extremism or reducing violence. Moderation is also defined as an attitude of mutual respect for various diversity in aspects of life ranging from ethnicity, religion, culture, customs, race to nation (Dawing, 2018). Some researchers say that religious moderation is manifested through an attitude that stays away from extreme behavior and always tries to take a middle way in attitude and behavior towards all elements of differences of opinion, especially in matters of religion (Nurdin, 2021 ; Akhmadi, 2019 ; Arifinsyah et al., 2020). From this understanding, it can be concluded that religious moderation is an attitude or religious perspective of someone who is moderate or moderate through the way he shows in understanding and practicing his religion in a non-extreme way so as to create a tolerant, harmonious, humanist and non-existent social life violence.

The Indonesian Ministry of Religion has identified 4 (four) characteristics that are indicators of religious moderation, namely: 1) National commitment; 2) Tolerance; 3) Anti violence; 4) Accommodating to culture (Kemenag, 2019) These four indicators are crucial to be strengthened, especially in the younger generation who should act as agents of religious moderation. Early childhood must be taught not to look at things narrowly and to be radical towards differences and diversity in Indonesia. It is precisely this variety of diversity called *Bhineka Tunggal Ika* which has become a unifying symbol of the Indonesian nation.

The preliminary research has been carried out by researchers through interviews and filling out questionnaires via google form to the head of the IGRA (Islamic Kindergarden Teachers Association) Salatiga and Semarang Regency. The fact showed that there has been no specific material in the early childhood curriculum in Islamic Kindergarden (RA) that discusses specific themes about religious moderation. This is certainly a challenge when religious moderation is a theme that is heavily echoed by the Ministry of Religion in this era. As for strengthening the attitude of religious moderation, RA teachers only teach children through daily exemplary attitudes, but have not been integrated with teaching materials in the early childhood curriculum. In addition, to corroborate the results of the interviews, a survey of 50 respondents of RA teachers in Salatiga and Semarang Regency has also been conducted regarding the recommendations for teaching materials they need to develop materials containing religious moderation. The results of the survey show that 54% of RA teachers recommend children's story books, 10% of respondents recommend posters, 12% of respondents recommend digital applications, and 24% of respondents recommend videos. From the results of these percentages, it shows that the majority of RA teachers recommend

researchers to develop products in the form of children's story books. They stated that children's story books are one of the most effective media considering that children really like stories. It is also closely related to the development of children's literacy skills which affect the development of their values, beliefs, attitudes, behavior and perceptions through an exemplary story. Based on these recommendations, the researchers will develop a children's story book based on religious moderation to strengthen aspects of religious and moral values for students at RA in Salatiga and Semarang Regency.

Language is an ability to communicate with other people. Language is a means of communication to express thoughts and feelings through symbols or symbols by using spoken, written, gestures, numbers, paintings, and facial expressions. In Permendikbud No. 137 of 2014 it is stated that the language aspects and religious and moral values aspects are included in 6 (six) aspects that must be developed as the National Standard of Early Childhood Education in addition to the physical-motor, cognitive, language, socio-emotional, and artistic aspects. Based on Child Development Achievement Level Standard (STPPA), aspects of language in children include 3 things, namely (1) Understanding (receptive) language, which means understanding stories, orders, rules, and liking and appreciating reading; (2) Expressing Language, which means being able to ask questions, answer questions, communicate verbally, retell what is known; (3) Literacy, which means understanding the relationship between letter shapes and sounds, imitating letter shapes, and understanding words in stories (Ernawati et al., 2019). Meanwhile, the aspects of religious and moral values are related to character, manners, and the willingness to carry out religious teachings in daily life (Anggraini & Syafril, 2018). Philosophically, moral education will continue to develop with various perceptions from experts referring to the realm of character, moral and religious values (Campbell et al., 2010). The level of achievement and development of aspects of religious and moral values in early childhood is strongly influenced by the development of their age. Referring to the Child Development Achievement Level Standard (STPPA) aged 5-6 years cited by Nurjanah (2018) , children aged 5-6 years are beginning to be able to recognize the religion they follow, are able to get used to doing worship, are able to understand noble behavior such as being honest, helping , polite, respectful, etc., able to distinguish good and bad behavior, and get to know the rituals and holidays of their religion, and respect other religions. In other words, instinctively children aged 2 to 6 years have basically started to know their religion, know their God, perform worship, and recognize religious differences, and are able to behave in a noble manner according to the teachings of their religion.

The Minister of Education and Culture recently officially launched the concept of "Freedom of Learning" as a policy innovation in post-pandemic learning. The concept of "Freedom of Learning" aims to form a profile of Pancasila students that reflect *Pancasila* values including faith, fear of God Almighty, and noble character, global diversity, mutual cooperation, independence, critical and creative reasoning (Srirahmawati & Hunaifi, 2022). The concept of "Freedom of Learning" introduces an independent curriculum that provides flexibility for teachers to select, develop and compile teaching materials that vary according to student conditions. (Maipita et al., 2021) The independent curriculum at the PAUD level adopts a constructivist approach which is a collaboration of Piaget's and Vygotsky's developmental theories. This curriculum strengthens literacy development that emphasizes the concepts of Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Mathematics (STEAM) (Rizaldi et al., 2020) Therefore, literacy development in PAUD is a reflection of the independent curriculum in optimizing children's development to achieve the Child Development Achievement Level Standard (STPPA). Thus, the core objective of this study is to analyze, develop, implement and evaluate the development of a moderation-based children's storybook as a reflection of the PAUD independent curriculum to form a profile of *Pancasila* students in early childhood.

This study aims to develop language skill through children's story books based on religious moderation to form a profile of Pancasila students in early childhood. The following is the formulation of the problem in this research, namely: (1) What kinds of children's story themes can be developed into children's story books based on religious moderation to strengthen aspects of religious and moral values in RA Salatiga and Semarang Regency? (2) How to improve language skill through developing children's story books? (3) How to implement children's story books in learning in RA Salatiga and Semarang Regency? (4) How are the results of the evaluation of the implementation of children's story books in shaping the profile of Pancasila students in students in RA Salatiga and Semarang Regency.

Research on the development of children's storybooks has been carried out before including, a study entitled "Development of Children's Storybooks By Incorporating Local Culture in My Favorite Theme for Grade I Elementary School", by NLMT Pratiwi (2017). The result of this study is that the storybook has proven to be effective as a companion book in the 2013 curriculum. This study uses R&D with the theme of developing children's storybooks, but the development of stories that will be carried out is based on religious moderation in early childhood to strengthen religious values and morals of children. Then, Rita Eka Izzaty, et al (Izzaty et al., 2017) in a study entitled "Development of Thematic Storybooks as Learning Media for Introduction to Reading in Preschool Children". The resulting research product is a thematic reading book used by teachers to introduce reading to children. The similarity of this research is both research on the development of early childhood story books but the product produced in the research to be carried out is a children's story book based on religious moderation to strengthen aspects of children's religious and moral values that can be used by children, because it uses simple language, easy for children to understand.

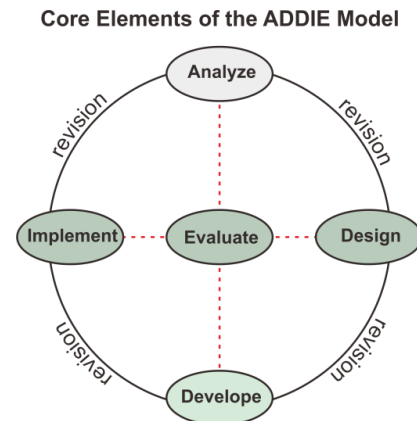
Another research is entitled "Development of Character Education Based Storybooks to Increase AUD Creativity", by Dian Miranda (2018). The results of this study are illustrated story books containing character education as a medium of learning to instill religious characters, tolerance, friendship, social care, discipline and love of peace that can increase the creativity of early childhood. The similarity of this research is that they both use R&D research and produce children's story books. In addition, this development research is both about teaching tolerance to early childhood, but the difference with the research that will be carried out is the reinforcement that will be given, namely the religious and moral values of children, while previous research is strengthening children's creativity.

Based on several previous development studies that have been described above, that research on the development of children's story books based on religious moderation has not been widely carried out, therefore it is necessary to carry out research and development activities for early childhood story books based on religious moderation to strengthen aspects of language and religious and moral values in students RA. **The novelty** of this research is that the results of the development product are in the form of children's story books which are still rarely encountered by early childhood educators which are used as reinforcement for aspects of language and children's religious and moral values, especially in shaping the profile of PAUD Pancasila students.

Methodology

The method used in this study is Research and Development (R&D). This study aims to develop children's story books based on religious moderation using the ADDIE model, namely *Analyze, Design, Develop, Implement and Evaluate*. (Branch, 2009). Because the purpose of this research is to develop a product, the appropriate research design is *Research and Development* (R&D). There are five phases of the ADDIE model design framework in this study; (1) Analyzing the needs of children and teachers in RA through surveys, FGDs, interviews, and curriculum analysis (2) Designing children's story books based on needs analysis; (3) Developing children's story books based on religious moderation; (4) Implementing children's story books based on religious moderation in RA; and (5) Evaluating the use of children's story

books based on religious moderation in RA. In short, the phases of conducting this research are shown in Schema 2.



Schematic 1. Core Elements of Instructional Design

Meanwhile, the research steps with the ADDIE model design are set out in table 1.

Table 1. ADDIE Design Steps

Stages	Activity Description
<i>Analyze</i>	: Identifying needs through interviews & questionnaires via google form to the head of IGRA (RA Teachers Association) Salatiga and Semarang Regency and 50 RA teachers in Salatiga and Semarang Regency. : Examining supporting theories and existing previous products to get <i>novelty</i> (the novelty aspect of this research). : Analyzing the curriculum in RA to develop storybooks based on religious moderation. : Selecting the product to be developed based on the evaluation of the contents of the questionnaire and interview recommendations.
<i>Design</i>	: Designing major themes and sub-themes that will be developed in children's story books based on religious moderation. : Determine the aspects that will appear in children's story books based on religious moderation, including aspects of moral messages, aspects of story structure, aspects of story frameworks and aspects of language.
<i>Develop</i>	: Design a synopsis of each theme of the children's story : Developing children's story books based on religious moderation in accordance with the stages, namely; (1) pre-writing stage (<i>brainstorming</i>), (2) story script writing stage; (3) the stage of the compiled story script draft; (4) the stage of editing the story script; (5) stages of compilation and improvement of story books, (6) stages of publication. : <i>Expert validation judgment</i> on the feasibility assessment of children's story books based on religious moderation involving early childhood education curriculum experts, literacy and children's story book writing experts, language experts, and religious moderation character education experts.
<i>Implement</i>	: Briefing RA teachers on how to implement children's story books based on religious moderation in classroom teaching. : Implementing research products in the form of children's story books based on religious moderation in learning at RA. : Record and document the implementation process.
<i>evaluate</i>	: Evaluating the results of implementing children's story books based on religious moderation towards strengthening aspects of religious and moral values for RA students in Salatiga and Semarang Regency.

This study involved participants from various circles. First, the initial data collection at the preliminary research stage involved the Chair of the RA Teachers Association (IGRA) Salatiga and Semarang Regency, as well as 50 respondents from RA teachers in Salatiga and Semarang Regency. The selection of informants was carried out purposively, namely based on the condition of the RA area located in Salatiga and Semarang Regency which represented schools with the criteria of being located in urban and rural locations. After going through various considerations, there are five Raudlatul Atfhal in Salatiga and Semarang Regency which are the main research locations.

This study uses 4 types of instruments. The first is an observation guide in the form of a checklist sheet in the form of a table that functions as a non-participatory observation. The second instrument is an interview guide which consists of open-ended questions. The third instrument is a questionnaire consisting of open questions and closed questions. The fourth instrument is a documentation guide that is used as a reference for collecting photos and archives such as syllabus and daily lesson plans related to research. To ensure the validity of the instrument, the item statement of the instrument leads to quantitative data. Meanwhile, experts were also asked to validate the instrument, especially on qualitative items. The validity of the material or content involves literacy experts and writing children's story books, while the validity of language involves linguistics lecturers. In addition, there are also experts in the field of early childhood education and religious moderation character education experts who are involved in construct validity.

The validity of the data in this study used technical triangulation and source triangulation. Through technical triangulation, observational data and questionnaires were checked through interviews and documentation. Meanwhile, the information obtained from the informants was checked with triangulation of sources from other informants.

Results and Discussion

Needs Analysis Stage

An online survey was given to 50 respondents who are PAUD teachers in Salatiga and Semarang Regency to explore information on the availability of teaching materials and product recommendations for teaching materials needed as well as character themes that can be developed to form a profile of Pancasila students. The results of the analytical survey are described in table 2.

Table 2. Survey of Needs Analysis Phase

No	Indicator	Response
1	Recommendations for the form of teaching material products for the introduction of religious moderation	- 54% of respondents recommend children's story books - 10% of respondents recommend posters - 12% of respondents recommend digital apps - 24% of respondents recommend videos
2	The recommended character theme that you want to develop	- 35% of respondents answered the theme of tolerance and inter-religious harmony. - 55% of respondents answered themes about character education such as mutual love, friendship, courage, politeness, honesty, independence, etc. - 10% of respondents answered the theme of introducing gender values

Based on the results of the survey at the needs analysis stage, it was concluded that the majority of respondents recommended children's story books as a product of teaching materials to teach religious moderation in accordance with the profile of Pancasila students with various considerations, namely children's story books can develop language skills in children, are able to stimulate children's imagination through storyline and train children's memory for a longer period. Respondents also thought that children's story books were able to significantly improve children's literacy skills and could be a means of shaping children's character through the characters presented in the story. The recommended themes are then accommodated into themes that appear in every children's story idea that is made.

Stage of Designing and Developing Children's Storybooks Based on Religious Moderation

At the stage of designing and developing children's story books based on religious moderation, there are several steps taken. First, the stage of designing sub-themes that will be developed into ideas in a story based on needs analysis. The themes raised are tolerance, inter-religious harmony, courage, honesty, mutual help, devotion to parents, caring friendship, patience, mutual forgiveness, sharing and introduction of identity and gender roles in children.

After the themes are created, the story script begins to be developed based on the predetermined theme. There are 15 story titles arranged by theme, namely: *Malika and Jessika*, *All Friends*, *Haunted House*, *Caring for Others*, *Genta the Big Body*, *The Beauty of Sharing*, *New Shoes for Rasyid*, *Sharing Toys*, *Beauty from the Heart*, *Helping Zen*, *Tragedy When Homecoming*, *We Are All Brothers*, *Mutual Respect*, *Drifting Slippers*, and *Goat Soup for Neighbors*. The story script that has been written is then submitted to the illustrator to be developed into a picture story.

Then, after the illustrated story was developed, the first phase of the product validation test was carried out by involving four experts consisting of literacy and children's story book writing experts, language experts, and religious moderation character education experts. Based on the results of the first phase of the validation test, there are still many criticisms and inputs from experts for product improvement. Some of the inputs are summarized in the following table 3:

Table 3. Expert Feedback and Suggestions

No	Expert Response	Feedback and Suggestions
1.	R-1	Good story idea, interesting design, but the writing is still too small.
2.	R-2	Some sentences are still written with wrong punctuation, for example, mentioning people's names still uses lowercase letters, periods, commas, exclamation marks, question marks and quotation marks, some still need attention. There are still writings that are not in accordance with the EYD.
3.	R-3	The book is very interesting. Nice and colorful design, worthy of children's enjoyment. But there is one story that is too patronizing, it seems that the story idea is not natural.
4.	R-4	Pay attention to punctuation, spelling, writing conjunctions. Overall the book is good for teaching religious moderation and character education to children.

Furthermore, after receiving input from experts, the next stage is to revise the product according to input from experts. The focus of the revision was carried out covering the entire content of the story, linguistic aspects and the design of the story book.

After the revision, the product was redeveloped, a second stage validation test was carried out to experts using a questionnaire instrument consisting of five questions in the form of a closed questionnaire that assessed aspects of the story content, the suitability of the story idea with the theme of religious moderation and the character profile of Pancasila students, story book design, suitability language in story books and the usefulness of children's story books in PAUD learning. The results of the validation test are contained in table 4.

Table 4. Product Validation Test Results Experts Phase 2

Indicator	Expert Response				Mean
	R-1	R-2	R-3	R-4	
Children's Story Content	5	4	5	5	4.75
Story Match with Theme	4	5	5	4	4.5
Children's Storybook Design	5	5	5	5	5
Language used	4	4	5	5	4,5
Usefulness	5	5	5	5	5
Total Mean 4,75					

Based on the validation results from experts, the total mean is 4.75, meaning that all experts agree that this children's story book based on religious moderation is valid and suitable for use by early childhood. As for questions that are qualitative in nature, some experts still provide suggestions for improving the book in the next printed edition.

In addition, after the product is declared valid by all experts, the children's story book is ready to be implemented at the trial stage in five Raudlatul Atfal in Salatiga and Semarang Regency.

The following is an example of a children's storybook development product based on religious moderation that has been approved by experts.



Image 1. Example of the final version of the Development product.



Image 2. Example of the final version of the Development product.

The entire contents of this children's story book have been declared valid and suitable for use in learning in Early Childhood Education (PAUD). In addition, this book is considered worthy of being a reference in developing children's literacy and character building that reflects the profile of Pancasila students with one of the indicators, namely religious moderation.

Implementation of Children's Storybooks in Learning in Early Childhood Education

The last stage in this research is the product development implementation stage which was carried out in five Raudlatul Athfal schools in Salatiga and Semarang Regency. The instruments used in this stage are observation and interviews. Observations were made to determine the conditions and responses and interactions of students when the teacher used this storybook as teaching material in the classroom. The results of the observations showed

positive responses and children's enthusiasm for this children's story book. The interaction between the teacher and students is quite warm and close because the teacher reads the stories in this book and the students enthusiastically listen to the stories read by the teacher. As for the end of the teacher telling the story, the teacher inserts questions that stimulate children to reason and think critically about the moral message and what characters are highlighted in the story being read. This is where the teacher collaborates on several aspects of child development, namely religious and moral values, cognitive, psychomotor, social emotional, language and artistic aspects. From the results of these observations, it was concluded that children's story books were effectively used as a learning reference source in improving literacy skills and forming the character profile of Pancasila students in early childhood .

In order to strengthen the observations, interview instruments were also used to investigate the responses of PAUD teachers who used the product of this research in learning. The results of the interviews also showed positive responses from teachers to children's story books, such as the results of interviews with SM teachers.

"The storybook is very good to develop language aspect. The children were very enthusiastic when I read the stories in this book. Through this story, I insert character education in children, where I ask my children to conclude and respond to stories I have read, for example by guessing who is a good character, who is not. Then also what is the moral message , and so on."

However, the interview also noted several inputs on this product, including those delivered by a US teacher.

"The design of the book is very good. There are funny caricatures. The idea of the story is also in accordance with character education, especially teaching tolerance to children. However, my advice, there are some sentences in the story that I think are too long. It would be better if the sentences were made simple so that it would be easier for children to understand them."

Based on the results of observations which were also strengthened by interviews with teachers at five Raudlatul Atfhal schools in Salatiga and Semarang Regency, it was concluded that the development product in the form of children's story books based on religious moderation was in accordance with the spirit of the independent curriculum in PAUD, especially in strengthening religious moderation, language aspect and profiles. Pancasila students. This book has been developed in accordance with a previous needs analysis of 50 PAUD teacher respondents in Central Java. The feasibility test has also been carried out through two stages on the experts and the results show the feasibility of this book to be used in learning in PAUD. Based on the results of product trials in five schools also showed positive responses from both students and teachers to this development product. However, there are still some limitations in this study, namely the effectiveness test has not been carried out in depth in all PAUD units so that research with wider trials must still be carried out for future research . In addition, there are still criticisms from several teachers on this book, so it still needs to be improved in the next printed edition.

The results of this development research strengthen the theory of (Strouse et al., 2018) which states that a story book will attract reading interest in children. This development research also supports previous research which states that a story is not only useful for increasing literacy in children, but a story is also able to shape language, characters, values, beliefs, attitudes, behavior and social norms in early childhood (Pulimeno et al., 2020) This research certainly strengthens that children need to be introduced to literacy that is able to develop their character, especially to become a profile of Pancasila students in accordance with the ideals of the Indonesian nation through an independent PAUD curriculum.

Conclusion

Developing language skills through children's storybooks based on religious moderation can form a profile of Pancasila students in early childhood. The results of the research showed, based on the needs analysis, there were 15 story ideas that had been developed in accordance with the themes recommended by the respondents, namely the themes of tolerance, inter-religious harmony, courage, honesty, mutual help, devotion to parents, caring friendship, patience, mutual forgiveness, sharing and recognition of gender identity and roles in children. Furthermore, the validation test categorizes these children's story books as valid and feasible to be implemented. At the product implementation stage in five RA schools, it can be concluded that this book is effective in strengthening aspects of language and religious moderation and developing children's character according to the profile of Pancasila students.

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